

## MARIA CALLAS. PORTRAITS FROM THE INTESA SANPAOLO PUBLIFOTO ARCHIVE

Gallerie d'Italia – Milano, Intesa Sanpaolo Museum

9 November 2023 – 18 February 2024

Curated by Aldo Grasso

*Milan, 9 November 2023* – On the occasion of the centenary of Maria Callas' birth, which falls on the 2nd of December, Intesa Sanpaolo is thrilled to present "*Maria Callas. Portraits from the Intesa Sanpaolo Publifoto Archive*," an exhibition curated by Aldo Grasso and taking place at the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan from the 9th of November to the 18th of February 2024.

Sponsored by the Municipality of Milan, this exhibition is the first initiative to kick off **Callas 100**, a programme of events taking place in November and December in different city venues. Aimed at paying tribute to the famous singer, actress and fashion icon, the programme Callas 100 has been organised by the Municipality of Milan in collaboration with Teatro alla Scala, Intesa Sanpaolo Gallerie d'Italia, and Piccolo Teatro di Milano.

The exhibition at Gallerie d'Italia presents a selection of **91 images from the Intesa Sanpaolo Publifoto Archive, all realised between 1954 and 1970**. Many of these images have never been published or exhibited before, for they embody that kind of imagery typical of a photojournalistic agency, and capture Callas in her everyday life, behind the scenes. Despite this unique perspective, the exhibition will open and close with two photographs depicting the great artist inside Teatro alla Scala: the first photo, shot on 1st December 1954, shows Maria Callas alongside three renowned conductors, Arturo Toscanini, Victor De Sabata, and Antonino Votto, after a rehearsal of "La Vestale." Taken on 7 December 1970, the last photograph on view portrays her return to Teatro alla Scala after many years, this time as a spectator, alongside her friend Wally Toscanini.

The Publifoto Archive holds over 1,500 photographs of Maria Callas, including negatives and vintage prints. These images depict the great soprano in both public and private settings, spanning the most significant years of her career, not only during her time in Milan but beyond. It serves as an extraordinary historical and iconographic resource, capable of providing important details for reconstructing the myth of a woman who left an indelible mark on her era.

Maria Callas is undoubtedly the first opera singer to enjoy significant media exposure, and the journalistic narrative about the great artist goes hand in hand with her life as a woman filled with intensity and turmoil, particularly in her personal relationships. This made her one of the key figures in the news and headlines of the 1950s and 1960s of the last century.

The photographers of Publifoto followed her everywhere, especially beyond the stage: on the streets, at restaurants, at the airport, or on Onassis's megayacht, in Biki's atelier, in her Milanese home, and in the courtroom on the days when her divorce case was being discussed.

They captured her alongside the men who influenced her life the most - her husband, the industrialist Giovanni Battista Meneghini, and Aristotle Onassis (Publifoto is responsible for the "scoop" service shot on 3 and 4 September 1959, which revealed their relationship to the world). They also captured her with lifelong friends: Antonio Ghiringhelli, Luchino Visconti, Vittorio De Sica, Franco Zeffirelli, and, of course, Pier Paolo Pasolini, with whom she worked on the film "Medea."

These photographs serve as snippets of reality but, at the same time, they also represent the consecration of her lasting legacy.

The exhibition is part of the initiatives aimed at enhancing the Publifoto Archive, which consists of over 7 million photographs from the agency founded by Vincenzo Carrese in 1937. It is the most significant private photojournalistic agency established in Italy in the 1930s. The Archive was acquired by Intesa Sanpaolo in 2015 through an operation that prevented its dispersal. It is now curated and managed by the Historical Archive of Intesa Sanpaolo at the Gallerie d'Italia in Turin.

Along with Gallerie d'Italia in Naples, Turin and Vicenza, Gallerie d'Italia in Milan is part of Intesa Sanpaolo's museum project, led by Michele Coppola, Executive Director of Art, Culture and Historical Heritage.

## **PRESS INFORMATION**

Intesa Sanpaolo

Media and Associations Relations

Silvana Scannicchio, +39 335 7282324

[silvana.scannicchio@intesasanpaolo.com](mailto:silvana.scannicchio@intesasanpaolo.com)

<https://group.intesasanpaolo.com/it/sala-stampa/news>

## **Pickles PR**

International Media and PR

Vanessa Saraceno, +39 327 3280153

[vanessa@picklespr.com](mailto:vanessa@picklespr.com)

## **VISITORS INFORMATION**

**Address:** Gallerie d'Italia – Milan | Piazza della Scala, 6 Milano

**Opening hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday: from 9.30 to 19.30; Thursday: from 9.30 to 22.30. Closed on Mondays. Last entrance: one hour before the closing time.

**Tickets:** full 10€, reduced 8€, free entry for Gallerie d'Italia members, students, people under 18s; free entry for all on the first Sunday of the month; special reduced 5€ ticket for people under 26s and Intesa Sanpaolo Group customers.

**Information and bookings:** [www.gallerieditalia.com](http://www.gallerieditalia.com) - [milano@gallerieditalia.com](mailto:milano@gallerieditalia.com) - Free toll number 800.167619

## **ABOUT INTESA SANPAOLO**

Intesa Sanpaolo is Italy's leading banking group serving families, businesses and the real economy with a significant international presence. Intesa Sanpaolo's distinctive business model makes it a European leader in Wealth Management, Protection & Advisory, highly focused on digital and fintech. An efficient and resilient Bank, it benefits from its wholly owned product factories in asset management and insurance. The Group's strong ESG commitment includes providing €115 billion in impact lending by 2025 to communities and for the green transition, and €500 million in contributions to support people most in need, positioning Intesa Sanpaolo as a world leader in terms of social impact. Intesa Sanpaolo is committed to Net Zero by 2030 for its own emissions and by 2050 for its loan and investment portfolios. An engaged patron of Italian culture, Intesa Sanpaolo has created its own network of museums, the Gallerie d'Italia, to present the bank's artistic heritage and to offer a venue for prestigious cultural projects.

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